



Department of Navy
Human Resources Service Center
Civilian Benefits Information Bulletin 2004-04

**Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)
Open Season
15 April - 30 June 2004**

TSP Open Season will begin on 15 April 2004 and end on 30 June 2004. An open season leaflet will be available on the TSP web site near the start of open season. Visit: <http://www.tsp.gov> to view this leaflet. This leaflet may also be available at your servicing Human Resources Office (HRO).

The TSP homepage has additional information that will be helpful to you such as:

- The "Summary of Thrift Savings Plan for Federal Employees", a booklet that provides detailed information about TSP benefits, at <http://www.tsp.gov/forms/tspb08.pdf>.
- Calculators for projecting your account balance, estimating loan payments, estimating your annuity benefits, and determining the amount to contribute to TSP to maximize benefits. These calculators are available at <http://www.tsp.gov/calc/index.html>.
- TSP rates of return and share prices at <http://www.tsp.gov/rates/index.html>.
- Access to your TSP account, including your TSP participant statement, at <http://www.tsp.gov/account/index.html>.

WHAT TRANSACTIONS CAN BE MADE DURING AN OPEN SEASON?

- Elect to participate in TSP. Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and CSRS Offset employees can contribute up to 9% of basic pay and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees can contribute up to 14% of basic pay. The total amount of TSP contributions cannot exceed the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) annual limit for elective deferrals. The elective deferral limit for 2004 is \$13,000.
- Increase/decrease the amount you currently contribute to TSP.
- Stop participating in TSP. You can stop participating in TSP at any time, but if you stop during open season you can resume participation during the next open season. If you stop participating outside an open season, you are not eligible to start participating again until the second open season after you cancel.

HOW DO YOU ENROLL OR MAKE A TSP CHANGE?

You can enroll in TSP or make a TSP change by using one of the automated benefit systems below:

- **The Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS)** is an Internet based application located at <http://www.donhr.navy.mil/>. Click on EBIS to access the application. Your Social Security Number (SSN) and password are used to log into EBIS. If you are a new EBIS user it is helpful to have a copy of your last SF 50, Notification of Personnel Action, or your Leave and Earnings Statement (LES). The following information can be found on these documents and is needed to create your EBIS password: Service Computation Date for Leave, Pay Plan, Grade and Step. You must also establish a Personal Identification Number (PIN) if you have not previously created one in EBIS or The Benefits Line. Your initial PIN is your month and year of birth (MMYY). The system will require you to change the 4-digit PIN to a 6-digit PIN of your choosing.

The EBIS application operates on Central Time. Please allow for Time Zone differences when conducting your transactions. This is very important during open season periods. For example, if your time zone is Pacific Time and you want your transaction to be effective Sunday, June 13, your transaction must be completed prior to 10:00 p.m. (Pacific Time), June 12. Otherwise, the effective date would be the following pay period, June 27th.

When completing a transaction, please ensure you are in the **"Transaction"** module of EBIS. Additionally, ensure you select **"Process"** so that your transaction processes. **"Print"** your receipt.

- **The Benefits Line** is a telephone interactive voice response system. You access The Benefits Line by calling 1-888-320-2917. Select option 1 to make a benefits election. To log into The Benefits Line you use your SSN and PIN. This is the same PIN that you created in EBIS. If you have not created a PIN, your initial PIN is your month and year of birth (MMYY). The system will require you to change the 4-digit PIN to a 6-digit PIN of your choosing. This 6-digit PIN will also be used to access EBIS.

Overseas employees who have access to DSN service can connect to The Benefits Line by dialing the DSN number to Randolph AFB (RAFB), 487-1110. Once the RAFB operator answers please indicate that you want to make an "official off net call." The employee must provide The Benefits Line number, 888-320-2917.

WHEN IS YOUR TSP CHANGE EFFECTIVE?

If you make a TSP Open Season change it is important to review your LES after the effective date of your TSP change to ensure that the change is properly reflected. Information about projected TSP open season changes is available in EBIS and The Benefits Line.

TSP open season changes will be effective as follows:

| TSP Elections Made | Effective Date Of TSP Election Is | TSP Change Will Be Reflected In Paycheck Received |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 15 April - 12 June 2004 | 13 June 2004 | 02 July 2004 |
| 13 June - 26 June 2004 | 27 June 2004 | 16 July 2004 |
| 27 June - 30 June 2004 | 11 July 2004 | 30 July 2004 |

HOW DO YOU ALLOCATE YOUR TSP FUNDS?

You can allocate any whole percentage of **future payroll contributions** to any of the five investment funds by making a contribution allocation and can redistribute **existing account balances** among the five investment funds by making an interfund transfer. You can make a fund change:

- By accessing the TSP web site at <http://www.tsp.gov> or the TSP ThriftLine at (504) 255-8777.
- By completing a paper TSP-50, Investment Allocation and mailing it to the TSP record keeper at the address shown on the form.

If you are a new TSP participant, all contributions to your account will be invested in the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund until you direct the TSP record keeper to allocate your contributions differently. Once you receive a letter from the TSP record keeper confirming that your new account has been established, you will be able to allocate your contributions among the five investment funds.

CAN YOU ENROLL IN TSP CATCH-UP DURING THE TSP OPEN SEASON?

TSP Catch-up should not be confused with TSP Open Season. TSP catch-up contribution changes can be made at any time because they are not tied to an open season. TSP catch-up contributions are additional tax-deferred contributions available to **TSP participants age 50 or older who are already contributing** either the maximum TSP contribution percentage or a dollar amount which will result in reaching the IRS elective deferral limit by the end of the year. The annual elective deferral limit for regular TSP contributions is \$13,000 for 2004. Catch-up contributions have their own limit: \$3,000 for 2004. **When making a catch-up transaction, the amount selected is the amount deducted bi-weekly from your paycheck.**

WHO DO YOU CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

If you have any questions regarding this notice or any benefits matter, please call The Benefits Line at 1-888-320-2917. Select option 4 to speak to a Customer Service Representative (CSR). CSRs are available 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (Eastern Time). Hearing impaired employees should call the TTY line for their servicing Human Resources Service Center (HRSC).